

Honorable Ministers, Commissioner Piebalgs, High Officials of Agencies, GPE Board Chair and CEO, ladies and gentlemen,

It's my great pleasure to represent today Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and pledge Finland's support for this replenishment for the Global Partnership for Education to help achieve our shared goal of equitable and quality learning for all.

Credible, country-led education plans and a partnership of governments, donors, international organizations and civil society are needed to get all children in school and learning. The Global Partnership drives increased domestic and external funding for education, and more efficient and effective systems and spending. GPE's strategic goals are indeed strategically chosen to meet global education challenges related to improved learning outcomes with effective teachers, support for fragile and conflict-affected states, and equity for girls, children with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.

Finland has been a partner in GPE since its inception as EFA Fast Track Initiative in 2002. Finland made its first contribution to the GPE Fund this year by signing an agreement in February for the years 2014 and 2015. Today, we are ready to make a pledge to continue the same level of funding in 2016 and 2017.

The Finnish education model, along with many other high performing education systems, proves that countries who invest to make their education systems more equitable make the greatest progress in improving overall learning achievement. Equitable education is a high national priority for Finland, and not surprisingly, education has been prioritized high in the present Government's Development Policy. Participation in the GPE partnership and fund is one sign of this commitment.

Finland is also working closely with GPE in many countries, for example in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nepal, in which we are co-funding education sector programs bilaterally, often together with both GPE, WB/IDA, and other multilateral and bilateral partners. Finland wants to remain a highly active partner in local education groups at the country level, working closely with the government and in harmonized cooperation with other donors.

In conclusion, a strong GPE replenishment including working together with developing countries, as they mobilize more domestic resources for their present and post-2015 education goals, will fund the critical investments for our children and our societies. Thank you.